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ABSTRACT

The bulletin presents selected results of the first followup survey of the national longitudinal study of the high school class of 1972, conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. Information is presented, in percentages (weighed national estimates), on the personal characteristics, postsecondary schooling, and civilian work experiences of these young people one and one-half years after high school graduation. In some cases, descriptive statements include comparisons of subgroups classified by high school program, race, ability, socioeconomic status, or sex. Information on nine personal characteristics is offered, including a rating of 11 values (86 percent found marriage and family life most important, 8 percent considered community leadership least important). The bulletin reveals that 64 percent had attended some kind of school or college since high school; of those, high percentages were satisfied with their growth and skills development. Those working (64 percent of the class) were most satisfied with working conditions, least satisfied with advancement opportunities. The most successful methods of obtaining jobs were direct application to employer (52 percent) and friends and relatives (46 percent); newspaper advertisements netted only 15 percent of respondents' jobs, and employment and placement services helped only 6 percent. A brief background description of the study, definitions, and footnotes are provided. (AJ)

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ONE AND ONE-HALF YEARS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION: THE CLASS OF 1972

This Bulletin presents selected results of the First Followup Survey of the NCES National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972. It describes these young adults approximately 1½ years after high school graduation. Statistics descriptive of the population as a whole are often followed by figures applying to given subgroups classified by high school program,[1] race,[2] ability,[3] socioeconomic status (SES),[4] or sex. A brief background description of this study and relevant definitions and footnotes are given on the last two pages.

1. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1972

- 16% were married as of October 1973: 8% of academic program versus 25% of vocational-technical program subgroups; 8% of high ability versus 24% of low ability subgroups.
- 50% were living with their parents in October 1973.
- 44% were dependent upon their parents or others for more than one-half of their financial support: 60% of academic program versus 27% of vocational-technical program subgroups.
- 78% were living within 100 miles of their spring 1972 residence.
- 25% of the young women thought they would be nonworking homemakers or housewives when they are 30 years old.
- 83% agreed that "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself": 84% of whites versus 75% of blacks.[5]
- 15% agreed that "Every time I try to get ahead, something or somebody stops me": 13% of whites versus 30% of blacks.[5]
- Their most important values in life involved:[6]

	Percent
–marriage and family life	86
–success in line of work	79
–strong friendships	72
–steady work	67
–better opportunities for their children	61
–leisure time for own interests	52

- Of least importance were:

–working to correct social and economic inequalities	19
–having lots of money	12
–getting away from areas where they live	9
–living close to parents or relatives	9
–being a community leader	8

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- New data of unusual interest
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II. POSTSECONDARY SCHOOLING OF HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1972

- 64% had attended some kind of school or college since high school.
- 12% were taking vocational or technical courses at some kind of school or college when they completed the questionnaire.
- 38% were taking academic courses at 2- or 4-year colleges when they completed the questionnaire.
- 40% planned eventually to finish at least 4 years of college: 45% of males versus 35% of females; 70% of high ability versus 17% of low ability subgroups.
- The most popular fields of study for those in school in October 1973 were:
  - business 15%
  - education 13%
  - social sciences 12%
- Of those who changed fields of study between October 1972 and October 1973, the reasons cited most often were:
  - new information received about other fields 52%
  - interest aroused by other courses 48%
  - more jobs available in new field 35%
- Reasons least often cited for changing fields were:
  - poor advice received on original choice 24%
  - lack of information on jobs related to original choice 21%
  - courses were more difficult than expected 21%
- Of those who had changed schools between October 1972 and October 1973, the reasons mentioned most often were:
  - to obtain better career opportunities 48%
  - to maximize intellectual and personal development 38%
  - interest changed to course of study not offered 34%
- Of those who withdrew altogether from postsecondary schooling, the most frequently mentioned explanations were:
  - wanted to get practical experience (26%: 27% of whites versus 15% of blacks).
  - financial difficulties (24%: 35% of low SES versus 18% of high SES subgroups).
  - failing or not doing as well as wanted (22%: 21% of low ability versus 22% high ability subgroups).
  - offered a good job (18%: 22% of low ability versus 13% of high ability subgroups).
  - school work not relevant to real world (18%: 12% of low ability versus 24% of high ability subgroups).
  - marriage, actual or planned (14%: 8% of males versus 21% of females).
- Of those who had received some postsecondary education or training,[7]
  - 82% were satisfied with intellectual growth.
  - 76% were satisfied with development of work skills.
  - 73% were satisfied with ability, knowledge, and personal qualities of most teachers.
- Of those who did not have any postsecondary schooling, the most frequently cited reasons for not continuing their education were:
  - wanted to earn money for myself (66%)
  - plans don't require more education (42%: 35% male versus 48% female)
  - planned to be married (35%: 22% male versus 47% female)

III. CIVILIAN WORK EXPERIENCES OF HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 1972

- 64% had a civilian job in October 1973 (54% of academic program versus 76% of vocational-technical program subgroups; 65% of whites versus 58% of blacks).

- Those working in October 1973 were most satisfied with:[8]
  - –working conditions 81%
  - –job as a whole 78%
- and were least satisfied with:[8]
  - –opportunity for promotion and advancement in this line of work 60%
  - –opportunity for promotion and advancement with this employer 58%

- 10% were working at another (second) job in October 1973.

- 52% of those employed in October 1973 expected to be working for the same employer in October 1974.

- 56% of those employed in October 1973 expected to be in the same line of work in October 1974.

- Since leaving high school the most successful methods of obtaining jobs were:[9]
  - –direct application to employer 52%
  - –friends of relatives 46%
  - –newspaper advertisements 15%
  - –public employment service 6%
  - –postsecondary school or college placement service 6%

- Of those who did not have a job in October 1973, the reasons cited most often were:
  - –going to school (63%: 83% of high ability versus 34% of low ability subgroups).
  - –did not want to work (29%: 31% of whites versus 12% of blacks; 26% of males versus 32% of females).
  - –not enough job openings available (19%: 17% of whites versus 30% of blacks).
  - –full-time homemaker (24% of females).

- Of those who did not have a job in October 1973, 20% were looking for work in September 1973: (14% of high ability versus 31% of low ability subgroups; 37% of blacks versus 17% of whites).

BACKGROUND

The percentages presented in this bulletin are weighted national estimates. They are based on the first-level-of-edit data tape and are subject to minor modifications due to subsequent editing. The data were derived from the answers of over 21,000 persons who participated in the first followup survey of the National Longitudinal Study (NLS) of the High School Class of 1972. Data collection for this survey began in October 1973. A response rate of 94 percent eventually was obtained.

The base-year survey of the NLS took place in spring 1972. A second followup survey (data not yet available) was initiated in October 1974; data will be collected from the same individuals periodically in the future. As the study progresses, a series of reports containing longitudinal and cross-sectional summaries and analyses of the data will be issued.

FOOTNOTES

[1] High school program was determined by the survey administrator's answer to the following question:
"Which of the following most clearly describes this student's present course of study?"
- General
- Academic or college preparatory
- Vocational or technical (in six categories)

In cases where the survey administrator did not provide this information, the senior's answer to a similar question was used to determine high school program.

[2] Race was determined by the subject's answer to the following question:
"How do you describe yourself?"
- American Indian
- Black or Afro-American or Negro
- Mexican-American or Chicano
- Puerto Rican
- Other Latin American origin
- Oriental or Asian-American
- White or Caucasian
- Other

[3] Ability was determined from the composite value of test scores in four areas: vocabulary, reading, letter groups, and mathematics. The mean of the four standardized scores served as a general ability index. The terms high and low ability subgroups refer to subjects in the upper and lower quartiles, respectively, of the composite-score frequency distribution.

[4] The SES index is a composite of five components: father's education, mother's education, parents' income, father's occupation, and household items. Each component variable was standardized and then given equal weight in calculating the composite index. The terms high and low SES subgroups refer to subjects in the upper and lower quartiles, respectively, of the composite-score frequency distribution.

[5] Figures stated are percentages of those subjects expressing an opinion who answered "agree strongly" or "agree." Other response options considered in the calculations were "disagree" and "disagree strongly."

[6] Ranking of life value factors is based on the percentage of subjects marking the response option "very important." Other response options were "somewhat important" and "not important."

[7] Figures stated are percentages of subjects who answered "very satisfied" or "somewhat" satisfied. Other response options were "neutral or no opinion," "somewhat dissatisfied," and "very dissatisfied."

[8] Figures stated are percentages of subjects who answered "very satisfied" or "satisfied." Other response options were "dissatisfied" and "very dissatisfied."

[9] Figures stated are percentages of subjects who answered "used and obtained job." Other response options were "never looked or used" and "used but did not obtain job."

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